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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0430
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9951
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1047
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
ZEN/AMCONSUL SURABAYA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 011799

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Central Sulawesi: "Poso 3" Executed - Violence
Erupts In West Timor

Ref: JAKARTA 4365

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva, and Marinus Riwu were executed September 22. Security situations in Palu, Poso and Tentena remained calm, inspired by a highly visible police and military presence patrolling the streets. Violence erupted in areas of West Timor, Nusa Tenggara Province, where 3-5000 rioted in Attambua, destroying the local parliament building, the attorney general's office, a hotel, gas station and many other buildings and vehicles. Police came at the mob using tear gas and rubber bullets causing injuries and possibly one death. ConGen Surabaya is aware of one U.S. citizen in Attambua, who is safe. END SUMMARY.

Poso Violence Antagonists Executed

2. (SBU) Convicted mass murderers Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus Da Silva, and Marinus Riwu were executed September 22 at 1:40 A.M. local time after postponements in April and August 2006 (reftel). According to Tasrip Siara, a journalist for Alliance Independent, the execution took place at Soeharto Hill in Ngatabaru, a police training ground close to the Palu airport. A few hours before, two trucks had left Palu's Petobo Prison; the first vehicle passed through the front gate as a diversion in case protestors planned to attack the vehicle carrying the condemned prisoners and traveled to the Palu Airport. The majority of the press followed the diversionary vehicle. The second truck carried Tibo, Da Silva and Riwu through the Petobo Prison back gate to the site of the execution. The three prisoners were executed by firing squad. Siara also stated that the bodies of Tibo and Riwu were flown at 5:00 A.M. from Palu to Soroako, South Sulawesi then driven to Beteleme, Morowali, Central Sulawesi for burial. Da Silva's body was buried at Talisa Cemetery in Palu immediately after the execution. Provincial police and military are providing heavy security at the burial sites.

Central Sulawesi Quiet Under Heavy Police Presence

3. (SBU) According to several ConGen Surabaya sources, the situations in Palu, Poso and Tentena were calm in the hours immediately following the executions. Siara stated that the day before the executions, the situation in Palu was like war time with police and military personnel tightly guarding every corner of the city, frequently patrolling the streets

with tanks. Darlis Muhammad, a journalist for Tempo Newspaper, also believed the emotional state of local Catholics was highly charged. He attended one of the masses held for the prisoners at the Santa Maria Catholic Church in Palu and heard angry statements from the crowd. Omnesimus Kambodji, head of the Inter-religious Communication Forum in Poso, told Congen staff that the situation in Tentena was tense the previous night, with a major police and military presence in the city, however no violent incidents occurred and life returned to normal in the morning following the execution. Religious leader Rinaldy Damanik, head of Central Sulawesi Assembly of Churches, actively asked his members in Poso to stay calm. A few Christian youths threw stones at the Tentena police station in the morning but there was no reaction from the police or the public. Police personnel were withdrawn from Tentena to Poso late in the morning reflecting their belief the situation in Tentena was secure.

West Timor Explodes - Executions Seen as Unfair

14. (SBU) The security situation in West Timor, East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT), however, deteriorated quickly. Immediately following the executions, an angry mob of approximately 1,000 in Kefamenanu, West Timor forcibly closed the prosecutor's office and chased away the regency Attorney General from his home. At approximately 9:00 A.M. local time in Attambua, West Timor, a mob of 3-5000 destroyed the local parliament building, the Attambua prosecutor's office and burnt the prosecutor's official residence. The crowd blocked roads by lighting tires and stacking debris and burned a hotel, gas station and other buildings. There are several unconfirmed reports from

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ConGen Surabaya contacts that local police confronted the mob and fired in to the crowd on two occasions, causing one death and several injuries. Another news account states the police used tear gas and rubber bullets, hospitalizing several protesters. According to Chrystal Holt, head of the local Save the Children agency, additional military and police forces were rushing to the area by helicopter.

15. (SBU) Vincen Loe, the head of YASO Foundation in Attambua, said that the crowd also demanded that the prosecutor's office release all prisoners. When the prisoners were not released, the mob destroyed the jail freeing 205 prisoners. Loe was concerned East Timorese living in West Timor would take advantage of the chaotic situation and continue rioting. Attambua residents were ordered to stay in their homes until the situation calmed. The Belu Regent, Deputy Regent, and the Bishop of Attambua patrolled the streets and asked people to gather at the local soccer field where the three community leaders then spoke to the crowd. Apparently this was not effective as the mob continued by burning the central market in town. According to contacts, local residents were not angry about the executions per se, but felt justice was not done because the 16 other accomplices alleged by Tibo were not adequately investigated. More importantly, there remains a strong local sense that the Poso 3, originally from NTT, were scapegoats, and had no chance to have a fair trial in Central Sulawesi. ConGen Surabaya also received word that a mosque in Ruteng, Flores, NTT was burned to protest the executions.

16. (SBU) The Central Sulawesi public prosecutor's office rejected several last requests of the condemned prisoners for security reasons. Domingus Da Silva had asked that his body be buried in Maumere, Flores, NTT. The three convicts had requested that their executions be witnessed by Joseph Suwathan (Bishop of Manado, North Sulawesi), Father Jemmy Tumbelaka (of St. Theresa Church in Poso), Father Melky Toreh (of St. Maria Church in Palu) and Roy Rening (lawyer for the three prisoners). The three also had asked that

their bodies to be prayed over at Santa Maria Catholic Church in Palu prior to burial. According to Siara, their attorneys were infuriated by the denials but the prisoners' families accepted the decision.

17. (SBU) An American citizen named Jennifer Goette, working for Save the Children in Kupang, NTT, is currently in Attambua. She is safely in her hotel, which was not attacked. She will try to leave via airplane tomorrow back to Kupang. Her husband is also in West Timor but is in a remote area, far from the violence. ConGen Surabaya notified her parents of her safety via email, at her request. There are no other known Americans in the area.

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